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## **Of marks and meaning : a palaeographic, semiotic-cognitive, and comparative analysis of the identity marks from Deir el-Medina.**

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## PALAEOGRAPHICAL TABLES

Tables I3-1 and I3-2 are provided separately in order for them to be consulted easily while reading the text. Table I3-1 contains metadata. It lists each class of marks with font-type and code, and provides it with the following data:

- the identity or identities of the workman or workmen who used the mark (if known);<sup>1</sup>
- a short description of the form. This description includes any reference to characters from script and the degree of cursiveness for the marks from group I, and a coded description of the compositional lines for the marks from group II. This coded description is mainly meant to facilitate the search for a specific mark. It makes use of the following abbreviations that describe a mark from left to right and top to bottom:

- h horizontal line
- v vertical line
- d diagonal line
- b bent line
- c circle

The form of the mark  $\Sigma$ , for instance, is coded h1d2h1;  $\Gamma$  is coded v1h1v2; and  $\Upsilon$  is coded b1d2v1. The second code is purely meant as a tool to search for a mark from group II in the database *Symbolizing Identity*<sup>2</sup>;

- the number of specimens in total, per period and, if applicable, per graphic variant;
- the methods that were used to execute the specimens (painted in black, red or yellow, incised, charcoal, embroidered, unknown);
- remarks that include a palaeographic description of forms and their development and further discussion on dating and possible identities.

The following abbreviations are used:

- With regard to the different nature of surfaces and objects on which specimens occur:

|    |          |     |                 |
|----|----------|-----|-----------------|
| O  | Ostraca  | T:  | Tool            |
| P: | Pottery  | Do: | Domestic object |
| G: | Graffiti | Ns: | Name stone      |

<sup>1</sup> Identifications have been established in personal communication with Daniel Soliman. For details on the identifications, for as far as they are not included in Table I3-1, see Soliman, *Of Marks and Men* (unpublished dissertation).

<sup>2</sup> But see also Part II, chapter 2, section 3, pp. 200-202.

- With regard to the specimens that are painted:

|    |       |     |                |    |           |
|----|-------|-----|----------------|----|-----------|
| b: | black | br: | black over red | y: | yellow    |
| r: | red   | rb: | red over black | ?: | uncertain |

Table I3-2 contains facsimiles of all the specimens, classified under their code and font-type and presented in chronological groups. The facsimiles were made digitally on the basis of photographs. Photographs, however, can be deceitful, as depending on light and angle forms may appear different than they look on the ostraca themselves. Therefore, in the process of making the facsimiles, we made use of complementary drawings and notes in order to interpret the forms on the photographs correctly and to present facsimiles that are as objective as possible. Fortunately, we were able to study the majority of ostraca ourselves: during visits to the *l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* (IFAO) in Cairo, the Petrie Museum in London, and the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden we were given the opportunity to make detailed notes, drawings and high quality photographs for study.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, we obtained facsimiles and photographs of the marks' ostraca from the Museo Egizio in Turin. There remain cases, however, where only a handmade drawing or facsimile, and no photograph or possibility to study the objects themselves were available to us. For instance, we only have drawings and a note by Černý on two ostraca that are now lost, Parker H5 and H7; and we only have a facsimile of Cairo CG 25651, and of the reverse of Turin CG 57140; and we only have drawings of Bruyère Rap. 48-51, pl. XVIII nrs. 07, 12, 24 and 24. That such documents can only be used with caution appears, for example, from a comparison between Bruyère's drawing of IFAO ONL 6324 and the photograph taken on March 20, 2014 (fig. I3-1):



**Fig. I3-1** O.IFAO ONL 6324. Left the drawing made by Bruyère. Right the photograph taken on March 20, 2014 in the IFAO, Cairo. Photograph by the author.

Bruyère missed the sun that accompanies the mark  $\text{𓂏}$ . Reinterpretations or suggestions for reinterpretations of drawings and facsimiles are mentioned in Table I3-1.

The facsimiles of the marks in Table I3-2 were made on the basis of the photographs by extracting the forms from their context and background. For the process of extraction we used Photoshop CS6. After selecting the form to be given treatment we used the Channel Mixer to create a large contrast between the form and the background. Subsequently, we used the option Levels to even further contrast the form from its background. As a result the form of the specimen was as dark as possible against a background that was as light as possible. The remaining background could now be deleted by means

<sup>3</sup> We are most grateful to Pierre Grandet and Nadine Cherpion of the IFAO, to Stephen Quirke of the Petrie Museum and to Maarten Raven of the RMO, who gave us permission to conduct detailed study of the ostraca.

of the Eraser Tool or simply by means of the actions select and delete. The facsimiles were saved as TIFF files with lossless data compression so as to prevent noise creeping into pictures saved as jpg.

This method results in facsimiles that are all in grayscale, which may be considered a disadvantage with respect to the use of black, red and even yellow ink. However, because of the fact that the palaeography was going to be printed in black and white, and because we only have black and white photographs of some of the ostraca in the corpus, it was decided to consistently work in grayscale and indicate the color of the ink in Table I3-2 by means of ‘(r)’, ‘(br)’, ‘(rb)’, ‘(y)’ or ‘(?)’, respectively for ‘red’, ‘black over red’, ‘red over black’, ‘yellow’ and ‘unknown’. If no such indication is given the specimen was made in black ink.

Unfortunately, we were not able at this point to represent each specimen to scale. Many photographs we were able to collect (e.g. of the Ashmolean, Berlin and BM corpora) were made without a scale, and even though approximate dimensions of most ostraca are known, the amount of work it would have taken to calculate the dimensions per specimen would not compensate for the results obtained from the information. Thus, no absolute dimensions of the specimens are given. However, as described above in chapter 1, it is precisely the relative dimensions that are most interesting as they reveal a development from large and variously sized specimens in dynasty 18 to specimens all of similar size comparable to signs of writing in the later periods. All specimens, in their original color and relative dimensions as they occur on the photographs that were available to us can be checked in the database.<sup>4</sup>

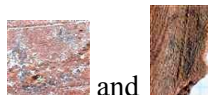
In the following cases it was considered better to not make a facsimile in Photoshop, but to include the original photograph in Table I3-2:

- when the paint was faded completely, or to such an extent that we were forced to guess a specimen’s form. The element of subjectivity became too high in examples such as



,<sup>5</sup> In some cases nothing of the form remains and we were only able to interpret and classify it on the basis of sequence. Such examples have been left untreated;

- when treatment in Photoshop would in fact make the form of a specimen less clear than the original photograph. This is the case in some faded painted specimens, but also in examples where the specimens are incised. Examples of painted specimens that are fairly clear in photograph, but which became less clear when given treatment are



and

.<sup>6</sup> Similar examples of incised specimens are



.<sup>7</sup>

A final word should be added about the selection and method of creating the font that is used in both the Tables, as well as in the text throughout this dissertation. Instead of simply drawing the font-types

<sup>4</sup> Available to those who have received a guest account.

<sup>5</sup> Hardly recognizable, but on the basis of sequence to be identified as, respectively, I 04.010 on IFAO ONL 6303, I 04.036 on BTdK 541 and I 04.036 on IFAO ONL 6449

<sup>6</sup> Respectively I 04.028 on IFAO ONL 6439 and I 13.008 on IFAO ONL 6472.

<sup>7</sup> Respectively I 04.028 and I 04.036 on IFAO ONL 6240.

by hand or use hieroglyphic signs, it was decided to base the font-types on existing specimens with a form that appeared representative for the whole class (the prototypical ‘best member’ specimens). However, in some cases the most representative specimens of a class could not serve as reliable sources, because they were damaged or faded, or because we only have facsimiles that we were not able to check against the originals. The degree of preservation and accessibility were thus criteria that were reckoned with in selecting the specimens to be used as the basis for the font-types.

To create the font-types, the selected specimens were given the same treatment in Photoshop as described above, but subsequent treatment followed in Adobe Illustrator CS6. The TIFF files of the selected specimens were turned into vector images by tracing them through the option ‘Image Trace’. The vector traces are incorporated in the Tables as pictures, but they were also sent to Hans van den Berg who turned them into a font that could be used in Word.<sup>8</sup>

The Tables are given as appendices.

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<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to Hans van den Berg for providing us with the technical support. Also, the work carried out by Rikst Ponjee was indispensable. A remark that is unrelated to the good work done by Hans and Rikst, but does concern the font is the following. The font was created at the end of 2014, but at the moment that this dissertation and the palaeography were finalized, there were still changes taking place in the classification of the marks: some marks were reinterpreted and in a few cases classes were added (e.g.  I 06.055;  I 19.022). At present, the font does not yet contain characters for such new classes.